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Dear adoptee

Firstly, we would like to say thank you for opening your home to one of our amazing rescue dogs/cats and congratulations! We hope you will be very happy!

This is just some information and tips that will assist you with your new pet.

When bringing a new animal home there are some things you will have to keep in mind:

- *This dog or cat will need some time to adjust to his/her new home and surroundings, please keep this in mind and give him/her some time to settle in and get accustomed to everything. Since New Beginnings specializes in rescue and rehabilitation work there is a good chance that your new dog/cat has never really been in a home environment or only know of a home environment with abuse and neglect, and he/she will need time to get used to all the new things and a new lifestyle.*
- *Your new dog/cat probably has a past – and just like with humans their past experiences mould and shape them and their behaviour – for example your dog may be acting scared toward strangers and that might be because in his past strangers weren't always to kind, or he is very protective of his food because in his experience if he doesn't protect it he will lose it. The good news is that your new dog/cat and his/her behaviour is still being moulded and shaped every day. Just because your dog is behaving that way at the moment doesn't mean that is how he/she will behave for the rest of his/her life. While we do our best at the rescue centre it is now your responsibility to mould and shape his/her behaviour from here with patience and love. For example give your new dog/cat the opportunity to see that all strangers aren't scary – with time, some love and understanding he/she will adjust accordingly.*
- *Take things slow and start small, there are many things that your new dog/cat may not be used to (for example crowds), keep this in mind when exposing your dog/cat to different things. For example with crowds start with only a few people and gradually work your way up to larger groups and thus set your new dog up for success – try not to throw them in at the deep end and expect them to swim.*
- *Try not to force anything that is not really truly necessary – if your dog feels more comfortable lying in his/ her bed when people come to visit don't force him/her to interact with them – with time and patience he/she will come out of his/her shell. Let them set the pace.*

- *If you have other pets, give them some time to adjust and get used to one another. Do not freak out with the first growl or fight. It might happen, but in 95% of the cases – they settle in and become best friends!*
- *We are available if you need advice or have questions, feel free to contact us with any questions, we will assist as best we can or refer you to someone who will be able to assist you.*

Below are a few information sheets on common problems and questions. We hope this helps and that you and your new pet will be very happy together

P.S. we love hearing how it is going with them – send us a update, photo or video every once in a while ;-) it makes us so happy knowing that they are doing well and are happy.

Potty training:

Potty training is a very helpful skill to teach your puppy. It makes life for both the puppy and the owner much more pleasant. Follow these guide lines for successful potty training.

During the day:

- Take the puppy out to her potty spot (as dogs/puppies almost always urinate and defecate in the same place) after she has taken a nap, ate, drank water or played.
- Take the puppy out to his potty spot every other hour.
- Whenever the puppy urinates or defecates outside, praise the puppy with a lot of excitement. You can even give her a treat or play with her favourite toy.
- If the puppy has an accident inside the house, do not punish him! Puppies have short attention spans and will associate the punishment with what he was doing at the moment of punishment and not the accident.
- In the event of an accident, take the puppy outside to her potty spot and wait until she urinates or defecates. Remember to praise her when she potties outside. Then clean the accident spot (inside the house) with sunlight liquid or vinegar when the puppy is not around. This is important as the puppy should not think that you give attention to the accident inside otherwise she will simply do it again.
- If you are not at home during the day it is wise to leave the puppy in the back yard where he can use his potty spot freely. It is also wise to leave your puppy outside for at least an hour every day for him to learn to use his potty spot.
- If you don't have a secure back yard you can make use of a crate or puppy pen. This should have enough room for the puppy to have a spot where she can potty as well as sleep and play. You can provide a potty spot by laying newspaper on the ground and placing a piece of your puppy's faeces on it.
- Never rub a puppy's nose in his accident, this creates distrust and is very unhygienic.
- Design an eating schedule for your puppy. Preferably feeding your puppy twice daily. The best times are at around 6 am and 6 pm. This gives the puppy time to digest and helps you to stick to your potty training routine.

During the night:

- Remove your puppy's water about 2 hours before going to bed, this will prevent accidents from happening during the night.
- Feed your puppy his last meal 2-4 hours before going to bed, this will give the puppy enough time to digest and use the potty before bed time.
- Please take your puppy outside, to his potty area before bedtime. Remember to stand with him until he is done. Make sure he urinates and defecates.

- Take your puppy to her potty place every hour or second hour. Remember to stay with your puppy until she is done pottyng. This can be very challenging for the heavy sleepers out there, but don't give up!

REMEMBER!!!

- Always go out with your puppy to his potty spot and wait until he is done. If you just put him outside he will most probably sit at the back door and whine, when you bring him in after a while he will most likely urinate or defecate in the house...
- Stick to the potty training schedule!
- DON'T GIVE UP! YOU CAN DO THIS.

Good eating habits:

During feeding times, dogs can learn a lot of behaviours. These behaviours can be either good or bad. It is very important to teach a dog good eating habits in order to prevent aggression during feeding time. Think of the damage that a 40kg Boerboel or German shepherd can do if a small child puts his/ her hand into the dog's food bowl while the dog is eating and is not used to small hands in their food bowl.

The following guide lines can help to prevent these unfortunate incidents from happening.

- Decide on a specific feeding time that suits you and your family and stick to it. Dogs flourish with routine and consistency.
- Remember that puppies under the age of 6 months need to be fed 3 times a day.
- Feed at least one meal a day by hand. This will teach the dog/puppy to like human hands as well as make the association that hands mean something nice. It will also teach the dog/puppy to take food gently from human hands and will also help to prevent food aggression.
- Make feeding times interesting by making one meal a game. You can either throw the food on the ground for the dog/puppy to find (this teaches the dog/puppy to use his/her nose, which is essential as it is one of the key ways that dogs communicate), hide the food so that the dog/puppy has to look for it using his/her nose or use the dog/puppy's food to train some awesome tricks. Another way to make feeding times fun is using brain games. Nina Ottosson has an amazing range that I would definitely promote.
- Prevent food aggression by either throwing a yummy treat into the dog/puppy's bowl whenever he/she eats. You can also sit next to the bowl while the dog/puppy eats and through a few kibbles in the bowl. You can also fidget and play with the dog/puppy's food inside the bowl while the dog/puppy is eating.
- Always give your dog/puppy's bowl back with a very yummy treat inside if you have to take it away.
- Never give food to your dog/puppy when he/she is excited. Rather wait, with the bowl in front of your chest until he/she sits down on their own and makes eye contact.
- Teach the dog/puppy to wait for his/her food. Stand with the bowl in front of your chest. When the dog/puppy is relaxed and sitting lower the food bowl. If the dog/puppy comes forward to see what is in the bowl, calmly raise it again and start the process over until the dog/puppy calmly sits and waits for his/her food with the bowl on the ground.
- If you have more than one dog in your household you can take a bit of dry dog food, have your dogs or puppies sit in a row and give each one a kibble. The goal of this exercise is to teach the dog/puppy to calmly wait for his/her turn.
- Never leave the food bowl down all day. Give the dog/puppy his/her food at the times that you have put aside as feeding times and only leave the food down for 15 minutes at most. If your dog/puppy does not eat all his/her food or does not eat at all pick the food up after 15 minutes and present it again at the next feeding time. The dog/puppy will not deteriorate or lose weight by skipping one meal. (Very often owners find that their dog/puppy eats less or stops eating all together when food is available at all times).
- If the dog/puppy growls when you come near his/her food bowl, do not punish him/her. Growling is simply a way that a dog/puppy says "I am uncomfortable with what you are doing now". By punishing growling, you are taking away this communication skill and this can lead to a dog that nips or bites "without warning" as you took away the "warning".

Digging:

Digging is one of dog owner's biggest frustrations, but in reality... dogs love to dig. It's a natural behaviour that helps a dog to release some of his pent up energy and frustration. One can, however, teach a dog not to dig or to dig in one particular spot.

Digging patch:

A digging patch is one of the best ways to have a dog, a garden and be completely happy. Here's what you do.

- Buy a small plastic swimming pool (one of those that looks like a shell that children like to play in, not the inflatable ones), make a few holes in the bottom of the shell and fill the shell with sand.
- Place the shell in your garden where you don't mind your dog to dig.
- Throw a few very yummy treats on top of the sand in the shell and allow your dog to eat them while you praise him very enthusiastically.
- Once your dog grasps this idea you can place the treats slightly under the sand, again, encourage your dog to find the treats and praise him with a lot of enthusiasm.
- You can now place the treats deeper and deeper beneath the sand.
- Once your dog has learnt to dig in the shell you can place yummy treats inside the shell every day before leaving for work. This will give your dog something to do when you aren't at home, teach him to only dig in one place (the digging patch) and provide him with the stimulation that he needs.
- **IMPORTANT:**
- Increase the value of your treats when using fertilizer in your garden.
- When doing scavenging hunt for food in your garden, do not place any treats beneath the soil in your garden.

Scavenging hunt:

This is a very fun activity for both dogs and owners. It provides your dog with something to do when you aren't around or it can be a fun game that dog and owner can play together. It also provides your dog with mental and physical exercise that promotes health and decreases behavioural problems such as boredom, anxiety and destructiveness. It can be done both in and outside the house.

- With your dog on a leash, place a yummy treat in a location where it is clearly visible for your dog. Point to the treat and say "find it". Once your dog takes the treat, praise enthusiastically. Repeat this until your dog understand that "find it" means there's a treat somewhere.
- With your dog still on a leash, place the treat in a more difficult place, for example where the dog has to use her nose (behind a pot plant in the garden or a pillow in the living room). Give the "find it" command and see if your dog can find the treat. If, after a minute or two, he has not found the treat yet, point to where the treat is and encourage him to "find it". As soon as your dog has found the treat, praise him enthusiastically. Repeat this until your dog grasps the idea.
- You can now place the treats in more difficult places for your dog to find. You can also let go of your dog's leash. Remember to praise your dog when she finds a treat.
- You can also hide treats in your home or in the garden when you aren't at home. This will keep your dog out of trouble and too busy to dig.
- Please remember that in order for these techniques to work you need to be consistent and hide treats almost every day. Your dog will also need a lot of exercise, such as walking, and mental stimulation such as trick training or brain games. A tired dog is a happy dog. And a happy dog will not ruin your garden.

Teaching your dog to recall:

Teaching recall can sometimes be a challenge. The trick is to make yourself much more interesting for your dog than the environment.

- Start in your own yard. Allow your dog to play and sniff around. Then crouch down and call your dog in a very high pitched voice. If your dog comes to you, praise and treat your dog. Because recall is so difficult, it is wise to use a very high value treat such as cooked chicken or liver bread. If your dog doesn't come to you, clap your hands and run backwards, this should entice your dog to run towards you. When he reaches you, praise and treat him.
- If you are struggling to get your dog to come when called you can treat your dog whenever he comes without you calling him. This conditions your dog's brain to think that whenever he comes to you he gets a treat. Once your dog knows this you can try to call him again. If he comes, praise and treat him excitedly.
- Once your dog has mastered the recall in your yard, you can move to a more public area, like a park. Attach a long line to your dog to ensure that he doesn't run off. Allow your dog to sniff around for a while. Crouch down and call your dog in a high pitched voice. If your dog comes, praise and treat him. By praising I mean going completely nuts when your dog comes to you.
- If your dog doesn't come to you, sit down and wait for your dog to come to you (this may take a while, but be patient). Once your dog comes to you make a huge fuss about it. Praise your dog vigorously and give him the yummiest treat ever. Once your dog checks in with you on a regular basis for his treat, start calling him from a distance again. If he comes to you, praise vigorously and treat.
- Once he successfully comes each time you call, move to other public places and repeat the bullets. Remember that dogs cannot generalize and therefore you may have to start over at almost every public place you go. Please don't scold your dog for not coming, as this will break down everything you have achieved, and be PATIENT!
- NEVER call your dog when you want to scold him. Your dog needs to know that only good things happen when he comes to you, otherwise he won't come when you call him.

Teaching your dog to walk on a loose leash:

Having a dog that calmly walks next to you whilst out and about is a real pleasure. It, not only, makes life a lot easier but also helps to create a solid bond between dog and owner. Follow these steps to teach your dog to heel.

- Once your dog is accustomed to a flat collar (please do not use a choke chain as it can cause major damage to your dog's trachea), attach his leash to the collar and allow your dog to freely walk around, dragging the leash. (If you have a very timid dog, you might want to use some yummy treats to coax your dog to move). After a few repetitions your dog should be able to walk around, dragging his leash, without any signs of stress. Stress signals include tail between the legs, shivering, long and frequent yawns, large dilated pupils and a cowering body posture.
- Once your dog is confident with the leash, you can start holding the leash in one hand. The most important part of this step is to praise and treat your dog every time you hold the leash. Repeat this until your dog is comfortable with you holding the leash.
- When your dog is comfortable with you holding the leash, coax him to your side with a treat. Once he readily comes to your side you can start moving forward. Take one step forward, if your dog stays by your side, praise and treat your dog. If your dog doesn't follow you, crouch down in front of him and use a treat to lure him towards you, do this until his comfortable coming to you with the leash. If your dog walks passed you, stop and kindly lure him back to your side with a treat. **Do not scold your dog for passing or not following you, as this will break down everything you have already achieved.** If your dog is struggling with this step, please go back to the previous step until your dog is completely comfortable with it, then try this step again.
- Once your dog can give a step forward with you, increase the amount of steps before you praise and treat. Remember to lure your dog back to your side as soon as he walks passed you. Repeat this in your yard until you can walk your dog on a loose leash.
- As soon as your dog stays by your side in your yard, start taking him for short walks outside the yard. **Remember dogs can't generalize, this means that you might need to start from the beginning. Do not scold your dog for this, your dog does not possess the part of the brain that allows him to generalize.**
- Remember to be patient!

Stimulating your dog at home:

Stimulation is extremely important for all dogs. It keeps them happy and content. Without the proper stimulation dogs tend to become anxious, frustrated and destructive. Here are a few ways to stimulate your dog at home:

1) Scatter feeding:

This is a very simple exercise where you simply throw your dog's food on the floor, scatter them and allow him to find and eat his food. This keeps them busy for a good 5-10 minutes and stimulates their brain as well as giving them physical exercise.

2) Scavenging hunt:

This is where you take your dog's daily food or lots of yummy treats and hide them in your home or garden for your dog to find while you are at work or busy. This provides your dog with exercise and mental stimulation.

3) Digging patch:

A digging patch is an amazing thing to have if you have a digger in your yard. Use a small swimming pool (one of those shell shaped, plastic ones that kids like to play with), make holes in the bottom and fill the shell with sand. Place some yummy treats on top of the sand and allow your dog to eat them. Once he grasps this, place the treats slightly under the sand and allow him to dig and find the treats. You can then start hiding treats deeper under the sand in the digging patch for your dog to find. Place treats in the digging patch whenever you aren't around. This will keep your dog out of your garden, exercise him and stimulate him mentally.

4) Trick training/ obedience training:

Training your dog to do tricks can be a lot of fun for both dog and owner when done correctly. This mentally stimulates a dog tremendously. You can teach your dog just about anything. Please message me for the different methods of training different tricks.

5) Obstacles:

You can build your own obstacle course for your dog to negotiate in your back yard. You can use simple objects such as a mop and four bricks to build a jump, a plank and two chairs for your dog to walk over. You can lay down plates of food in a row and have your dog weave through them without taking the food. The list of obstacles you can build is only limited by your imagination. Enjoy yourself!

REMEMBER: All these exercises are there for owners and dogs to enjoy. If your dog doesn't enjoy something, don't force him.

A RESCUE PET

Now I have arrived at your home,
everything is strange, and I don't feel good.

Do not feel impatient if I don't sleep in my new basket.
Yesterday, I slept on a stone floor.

Do not be terrified if I gobble up my food.
Yesterday, I had to do it to survive.

Do not get angry if I pee on your floor.
Yesterday, it did not matter.

Do not be sad if I am afraid of your loving hand.
Yesterday, I did not have one.

Have patience with me, it's your world,
but not yet mine.

If I trust you, I can give you the greatest gift I have to give...

My Heart 

Please never forget, I am rescued.
All I need is a bit of time to adjust.

 **New Beginnings**
Striking at the Roots



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